

**CLAIMS**

1 1. A method for providing contact list management in a chat session, comprising:  
2 providing access to a first contact list by a second chat session participant, said  
3 first contact list associated with a first chat session participant and said second chat  
4 session participant associated with a second contact list; and  
5 providing access to said second contact list by said first chat session participant.

1 2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
2 determining whether said first contact list is modifiable by said second chat  
3 session participant; and  
4 if said first contact list is modifiable by said second chat session participant,  
5 permitting the modification of said first contact list by said second chat session  
6 participant.

1 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said modification step comprises the  
2 step of adding contact information to said first contact list.

1 4. The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of displaying an  
2 icon to indicate whether said first contact list is accessible.

1 5. The method according to claim 4, further comprising the step of altering said  
2 display icon to indicate that said first contact list is modifiable.

1 6. The method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of displaying an  
2 icon to indicate whether said second contact list is accessible.

1 7. The method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of altering said  
2 display icon to indicate that said second contact list is modifiable.

1 8. The method according to claim 7, further comprising the steps of:  
2 permitting the selection of said displayed icon for said first contact list and said  
3 displayed icon for said second contact list by a third chat session participant having a  
4 third contact list;  
5 comparing said selected first contact list and said selected second contact list to  
6 said third contact list; and  
7 displaying contacts that are uncommon to said selected first contact list, said  
8 selected second contact list and said third contact list according to results from said  
9 comparing step.

1     9.     The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of:  
2             displaying contacts that are common to said first selected contact list, said  
3     second selected contact list, and said third contact list according to results from said  
4     comparing step.

1     10.    The method according to claim 9, further comprising the steps of:  
2             permitting any of said first chat session participant, said second chat session  
3     participant and said third chat session participant to modify any of said first contact list,  
4     said second contact list and said third contact list according to results from said  
5     comparing step; and  
6             permitting any of said chat session participants associated with said contact list  
7     to reject said modification.

1     11.    The method according to claim 7, wherein if said display icon indicates that said  
2     first contact list is not modifiable, further comprising the step of requesting said first chat  
3     session participant to allow said second chat session participant to modify said contact  
4     list.

1     12.    The method according to claim 7, wherein if said display icon indicates that said  
2     second contact list is not modifiable, further comprising the step of requesting said  
3     second chat session participant to allow said first chat session participant to modify said  
4     contact list.

1 13. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
2 requesting said first chat session participant to provide access to said first  
3 contact list; and  
4 requesting said second chat session participant to provide access to said second  
5 contact list.

1 14. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of providing  
2 accessibility status to selected chat session participants.

1 15. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of providing  
2 accessibility status to all active chat session participants.

1 16. A method for providing contact management to parties engaged in a chat  
2 communication session, the method comprising:  
3 providing access for a first contact list having contact records to a second  
4 participant to the communication session, said first contact list associated with a first  
5 participant to the communication session, said second participant having an associated  
6 second contact list with contact records;  
7 identifying similar contacts between contact records located in said first contact  
8 list and contact records located in said second contact list; and  
9 adding selected dissimilar contact records located in said first contact list to said  
10 second contact list.

1 17. The method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:  
2 determining if said first contact list is modifiable by said second participant to the  
3 communication session; and  
4 if said first contact list is modifiable by said second participant, adding selected  
5 dissimilar contact records to said first contact list.

1 18. The method according to claim 17, wherein said step of providing access to said  
2 first contact list further comprises the steps of:  
3 determining an accessibility status of said first contact list; and  
4 providing access to said first contact list if said accessibility status indicates that  
5 said second participant can access said first contact list.

1 19. The method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:  
2 determining if said second contact list is accessible by said first participant to the  
3 communication session; and  
4 if said second contact list is accessible by said first participant, identifying similar  
5 contacts between contact records located in said second contact list and contact  
6 records located in said first contact list.

1 20. The method according to claim 19, further comprising the steps of:  
2 determining if said second contact list is modifiable by said first participant to the  
3 communication session; and

4 adding selected dissimilar contact records located in said second contact list to  
5 said first contact list.

1 21. The method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of displaying an  
2 icon to represent whether a contact list for a participant to the communication session is  
3 accessible.

1 22. The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of modifying said  
2 icon to display whether said contact list for said participant to the communication  
3 session is modifiable.

1 23. In a chat session having a plurality of communicating chat session participants, a  
2 contact management method comprising:  
3 assembling and displaying a contact list in a GUI associated with one of the chat  
4 session participants; and  
5 accepting modifications to said contact list by another chat session participant.

1 24. A method for providing contact management in a chat session, comprising:  
2 sending a token of introduction originated by a first chat session participant  
3 having a first contact list, to a second chat session participant having a second contact  
4 list, said token of introduction providing a recommendation for said second chat session  
5 participant;

transferring said token of introduction to a third chat session participant who is known to said first chat session participant, said third chat session participant having a third contact list; and

if said third chat session participant accepts said token of introduction, modifying said third contact list with contact information for said second chat session participant.

25. The method according to claim 24, further comprising modifying said second contact list with information for said third chat session participant.

26. The method according to claim 25, further comprising discarding said token of introduction upon expiration of a specified period of time.

27. The method according to claim 24, further comprising executing said transferring step upon said third chat session participant initiating a chat session with said second chat session participant.

28. A system for providing contact management, comprising:  
a first contact list, said first contact list associated with a first chat session participant;  
a second contact list, said second contact list associated with a second chat session participant, said second chat session participant engaged in a chat session with said first chat session participant; and

7 a computing application program facilitating said chat session, said application  
8 program permitting said second chat session participant to modify said first contact list  
9 and permitting said first chat session participant to modify said second contact list.

1 29. The system according to claim 28, further comprising a computer application  
2 server for executing said computing application program.

1 30. The system according to claim 28, further comprising a first computing device for  
2 permitting said first contact list to be viewed by said second chat session participant  
3 and a second computing device permitting said second contact list to be viewed by said  
4 first chat session participant.

1 31. A GUI for providing contact management for chat session participants,  
2 comprising:  
3 a chat display window for displaying a first chat session participant and a second  
4 chat session participant engaged in a chat session; and  
5 at least one contact window for displaying contact information for at least one  
6 chat session participant engaged in said chat session.

1 32. The GUI according to claim 31, wherein said at least one contact window is a  
2 window pane within said chat display window.



1 33. The GUI according to claim 32, wherein said at least one contact window is a  
2 window pane external to said chat display window.

1 34. The GUI according to claim 31, further comprising a first modifiable status icon  
2 which indicates whether said first contact list is accessible and, if said first contact list is  
3 accessible, whether said first contact list is modifiable.

1 35. The GUI according to claim 31, further comprising a second status icon which  
2 indicates whether said second contact list is accessible and, if said second contact list  
3 is accessible, whether said second contact list is modifiable.

1 36. A machine readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having  
2 a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the  
3 machine to perform the steps of:

4 providing access to a first contact list associated with a first chat session  
5 participant by a second chat session participant associated with a second contact list,  
6 said providing step facilitating contact management for a chat session; and  
7 providing access to said second contact list by said first chat session participant.

1 37. The machine readable storage according to claim 36, further comprising:  
2 determining whether said first contact list is modifiable by said second chat  
3 session participant; and

4 if said first contact list is modifiable by said second chat session participant,  
5 permitting the modification of said first contact list by said second chat session  
6 participant.

1 38. The machine readable storage according to claim 37, wherein said modification  
2 step comprises adding contact information to said first contact list.

1 39. The machine readable storage according to claim 37, further comprising the step  
2 of displaying an icon to indicate whether said first contact list is accessible.

1 40. The machine readable storage according to claim 39, further comprising the step  
2 of altering said display icon to indicate that said first contact list is modifiable.

1 41. The machine readable storage according to claim 40, further comprising the step  
2 of displaying an icon to indicate whether said second contact list is accessible.

1 42. The machine readable storage according to claim 41, further comprising the step  
2 of altering said display icon to indicate that said second contact list is modifiable.

1 43 The machine readable storage according to claim 42, further comprising the  
2 steps of:

3 permitting the selection of said displayed icon for said first contact list and said

displayed icon for said second contact list by a third chat session participant having a third contact list;

comparing said selected first contact list and said selected second contact list to said third contact list; and

displaying contacts that are uncommon to said selected first contact list, said selected second contact list and said third contact list according to results from said comparing step.

44. The machine readable storage according to claim 43, further comprising the step of:

displaying contacts that are common to said first selected contact list, said second selected contact list, and said third contact list according to results from said comparing step.

45. The machine readable storage according to claim 44, further comprising the steps of:

permitting any of said first chat session participant, said second chat session participant and said third chat session participant to modify any of said first contact list, said second contact list and said third contact list according to results from said comparing step; and

permitting any of said chat session participants associated with said contact list to reject said modification.

1 46. The machine readable storage according to claim 42, wherein if said display icon  
2 indicates that said first contact list is not modifiable, further comprising the step of  
3 requesting said first chat session participant to allow said second chat session  
4 participant to modify said contact list.

1 47. The machine readable storage according to claim 42, wherein if said display icon  
2 indicates that said second contact list is not modifiable, further comprising the step of  
3 requesting said second chat session participant to allow said first chat session  
4 participant to modify said contact list.

1 48. The machine readable storage according to claim 36, further comprising the  
2 steps of:  
3 requesting said first chat session participant to provide access to said first  
4 contact list; and  
5 requesting said second chat session participant to provide access to said second  
6 contact list.

1 49. The machine readable storage according to claim 36, further comprising the step  
2 of providing accessibility status to selected chat session participants.

1 50. The machine readable storage according to claim 36, further comprising the step  
2 of providing accessibility status to all active chat session participants.

1 51. A machine readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having  
2 a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the  
3 machine to perform the steps of:

4 providing access to a first contact list for a first participant to a communication  
5 session to a second participant to the communication session, said second participant  
6 having a second contact list, said providing step facilitating contact management for  
7 parties engaged in a chat communication session, said first and said second contact list  
8 having contact records;

9 identifying similar contacts between contact records located in said first contact  
10 list and contact records located in said second contact list; and

11 adding selected dissimilar contact records located in said first contact list to said  
12 second contact list.

1 52. The machine readable storage according to claim 51, further comprising the  
2 steps of:

3 determining if said first contact list is modifiable by said second participant to the  
4 communication session; and

5 if said first contact list is modifiable by said second participant, adding selected  
6 dissimilar contact records to said first contact list.

1 53. The machine readable storage according to claim 52, wherein said step of  
2 providing contact list to a first participant further comprises the steps of:  
3 determining an accessibility status of said first contact list; and  
4 providing access to said first contact list if said accessibility status indicates that  
5 said second participant can access said first contact list.

1 54. The machine readable storage according to claim 51, further comprising the  
2 steps of:  
3 determining if said second contact list is accessible by said first participant to the  
4 communication session; and  
5 if said second contact list is accessible by said first participant, identifying similar  
6 contacts between contact records located in said second contact list and contact  
7 records located in said first contact list.

1 55. The machine readable storage according to claim 54, further comprising the  
2 steps of:  
3 determining if said second contact list is modifiable by said first participant to the  
4 communication session; and  
5 adding selected dissimilar contact records located in said second contact list to  
6 said first contact list.

1 56. The machine readable storage according to claim 55, further comprising the step  
2 of displaying an icon to represent whether a contact list for a participant to the  
3 communication session is accessible.

1 57. The machine readable storage according to claim 56, further comprising the step  
2 of modifying said icon to display whether said contact list for said participant to the  
3 communication session is modifiable.

1 58. A machine readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having  
2 a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the  
3 machine to perform the steps of:

4 assembling and displaying a contact list in a GUI associated with a chat session  
5 participant, said chat session participant engaged in a chat session having a plurality of  
6 communicating chat session participants; and

7 accepting modifications to said contact list by another chat session participant.

1 59. A machine readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having  
2 a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the  
3 machine to perform the steps of:

4 sending a token of introduction originated by a first chat session participant  
5 having a first contact list, to a second chat session participant having a second contact  
6 list, said token of introduction providing a recommendation for said second chat session  
7 participant, said sending step for providing contact management in a chat session;

transferring said token of introduction to a third chat session participant who is known to said first chat session participant, said third chat session participant having a third contact list; and

if said third chat session participant accepts said token of introduction, modifying said third contact list with contact information for said second chat session participant.

60. The machine readable storage according to claim 59, further comprising modifying said second contact list with information for said third chat session participant.

61. The machine readable storage according to claim 60, further comprising discarding said token of introduction upon expiration of a specified period of time.

62. The machine readable storage according to claim 59, further comprising executing said transferring step upon said third chat session participant initiating a chat session with said second chat session participant.